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# THE CEA CRITIC

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## A NEW TEACHING METHOD

### The One-Term Course in Romantic Literature

Within recent years small colleges throughout the country have undertaken programs to reduce the number of their offerings, or at least to diminish the compass of certain courses by squeezing into one term the material which used to be covered in two. This may or may not be a good idea: certainly the subject has been furiously debated, and probably most readers are familiar with all the stormy arguments on the relative (and probably unmeasurable) merits of a one-term course offered every year as opposed to a two-term course offered in alternate years. Since it appears that the advocates of the former system have generally been triumphant, I should like in this paper, without taking sides on the issue, to describe one method of conducting a one-term course in English Romantic Literature.

An exchange of ideas on this problem might indeed be helpful. A random sampling of forty small liberal arts institutions (less than 1400 students) in the New England and Middle Atlantic states shows that twenty-eight have a one-term course in the Romantic Period; only eight have a two-term course (in three, the first term, but not the second, may be taken independently, while in five both terms must be

taken for credit); and four have either no specific course in the period at all, or have lumped it together with other material in some such offering as "Nineteenth Century Poetry." (I am not pretending that my survey was especially scientific. I simply restricted myself geographically and scholastically to the areas I knew best. But the figures would nonetheless seem to have some relevance.) Having thought, through most of my academic life, of teaching Romantic Literature in a two-term context, when faced with one-term boundaries I decided to change my approach with a perhaps bold experiment.

The first decision to be made was one of limitation. How much material should be covered? The subject being what it was, the answer came easily: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley formed the exclusive nuclear few, forced to rub elbows in a small clique, perhaps somewhat restively, while all the other writers of the period were consigned to a Limbo of lists of "Suggested Outside Reading" and such. Alas, this rigid segregation meant that favored essays of Lamb and Hunt, and Hazlitt's criticisms and De Quincey's sketches and Scott's novels, all would

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## THE REAL PROBLEM IN ENGLISH ONE

Recently, while waiting between lectures at a convention, I sat in a comfortable lobby and listened to an uncomfortable argument over the teaching of grammar in college English. Perhaps I should have said "teaching English grammar, and/or, and how much?"

The discussion was heated, and as someone said the participants were becoming about as ill-tempered as most people do when they argue about education. Why should this be? Everyone is agreed that the principal objective of the course is to encourage students to write, read, and speak in an acceptable manner. Whatever we do in addition to the writing, reading, and speaking is done as a contribution to making better writers, speakers, and readers. The time given over to grammar, or to whatever may be substituted for it, does not take up more than a third or fourth of the time given to English in the first semester. We may be arguing about the tail that we are trying to have wag the dog.

We are all agreed that linguistics, semantics, and the historical approach to language have value and that all English majors should have a satisfactory knowledge of them. We are not agreed upon what should be included in that one-third to one-fourth of the time in the first semester usually given over to grammar—in recent years most often functional grammar directed toward a study of structure. We have to remember here that most classes will be made up of non-English majors. What will best help these non-English majors to improve writing, reading, speaking—that is, beyond practice in all three, upon which we can all agree? What shall it be? Traditional grammar? The new grammar—if we may term it such? Linguistics? Semantics? Philology? All of them? None of them?

I do not think we can have too much discussion about the proper approach to English I, provided it is a discussion and not a name-calling brawl. In his Teaching Eng-

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## PROPOSAL FOR THE PH.D.

Being a junior college instructor filled with self-interest, I would like to suggest the possibility of altering current doctoral programs or making additions to them so as to bring Ph.D. work more in line with the type of teaching a junior college (or lower division university) instructor does.

The junior college has taken an important place in education; that this place will not only be solidified but will expand enormously in the coming years of booming college population is a certainty. I could document this and if I were writing to a lay audience, I might consider such documentation necessary. I offer only two facts: there are now 637 junior colleges throughout the country, 69 in California alone; at El Camino Junior College in Los Angeles where I teach, the enrollment this year is almost 11,000, a number which compares with less than 500 when the college opened in 1947.

The junior college has been and will continue to be an institution for teaching, not for research. This fact should reflect itself in the type of training that junior college instructors should receive. I refer, specifically, to the field of English and to doctoral training because almost all junior college instructors have their Master's degrees.

I believe that Ph.D. programs as now conducted do not give the broad base in humanities that is essential for the type of teaching junior college instructors must do, particularly in our freshman composition courses where the prevalent approach is to allow writing to arise from discussion. If this discussion were about literary types or literary history, then current Ph.D. work would adequately serve its purpose. However, the discussions have little to do with anything literary.

Form becomes subservient to idea. We use texts with titles like *Thought in Prose*, *Ideas in Context*, and *Patterns for Living*. We are not concerned much with the sonnet as a literary type, but with what a specific sonnet says; we have little time for discussion of "The Eighty-Yard Run" as a short story form, but we are much concerned with critical analysis in an attempt to reach the theme; we are forced to set aside a scholarly presentation of history of the expository essay, but we are definitely concerned with the ideas expressed in specific essays.

And these ideas, as any instructor knows who has taught from a textbook such as *Patterns for Living*, are in the fields of religion, psychology, political science, history, art, music, science, philosophy, and anthro-

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## THE CEA CRITIC

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"Don't suppress that urge to write the editor" used to be one of the standing mottoes of CEA, repeated frequently by Burges Johnson, Bob Fitzhugh, and Max Goldberg. Coupled with it was usually the admonition that contributions must be brief and to the point (not over 1000 words).

It is true that our editorial office has quite a lot of material on hand awaiting publication, some of it very good material; but there is always room for a really lively contribution bearing directly on the concerns of the college English teacher or presenting CEA with a new and effective challenge. Especially to those of our members whose names have never appeared in

our columns (though of course we continue to value contributions from our regulars) we say, let us hear from you! Set down on paper that critical or constructive idea you have in your head that will start your colleagues thinking and be good for them, and send it in. You may be surprised to see how soon it will appear in print.

Rereading twenty years of the *Critic* (formerly the *Newsletter*) as we did this summer in working up an index was a revealing experience. Instead of being bored by what was of course a time-consuming task, we were fascinated and often had difficulty putting the work aside when other responsibilities called.

English teachers are both very vocal and very idealistic, and evidently they long to do the best work they can. In the *Critic* their writing is for the most part lively and they try to cut through to the heart of their concerns and rid themselves of false fronts and rationalizations.

Of course they aren't always successful, but the degree of realism with which they view themselves and their profession has, we think, been increasing through the years. The older *Newsletters* are somewhat hazed over by the rosy atmosphere of the familiar essay, with a certain amount of satisfied self-regard; not so much so the *Critic* of more recent date.

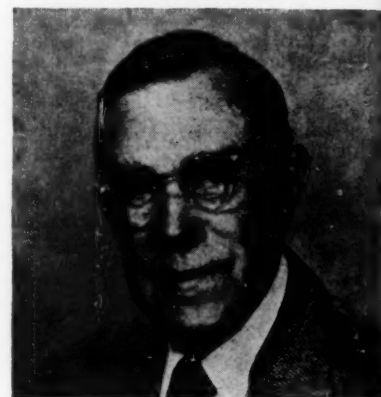
Occasionally one senses a certain amount of quarreling for the sake of quarreling or the announcement of a crisis where really only a problem exists; but for the most part *Critic* contributors have their feet on the ground and are trying hard to do important work that desperately needs doing. When they disagree, they are anxious to cut through to the philosophy underlying their disagreement so that, if possible, real truth can be found. This makes for constructive controversy.

The range of the discussions is immense; certainly, English is the one universal subject in the modern curriculum. Everything from the fine points of grammar to the fate of nations comes up for consideration.

Perhaps here is a problem for our future. Can we continue to exist as a specialty if we take upon our shoulders the sins of the world? So far at least, the *Critic* and the *Newsletter* do not indicate emergence of any convincing answer to this important question. It our profession able to face up to what it really is?

L.E.H.

## The man who reads dictionaries



H. A. OVERSTREET, author of  
*The Mature Mind* and co-author of  
*What We Must Know About*  
*Communism*, says:

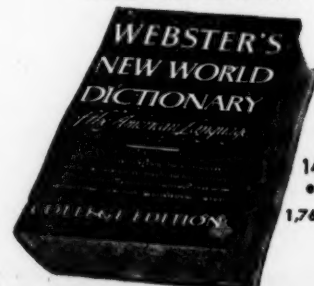
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Chairman: Henry W. Sams, University of Chicago.

Panel: Edward Gordon, Germantown Friends School

Albert Marckwardt, University of Michigan  
Willard Thorp, Princeton University

The panelists are members of a committee which during the past year has held four three-day meetings to discuss and define problems arising in all aspects and levels of the teaching of English. Mr. Marckwardt is chairman of this committee. The committee includes representatives of the College English Association, the American Studies Association, the Modern Language Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. The purpose of the meetings has been to design a comprehensive plan for review and revision of English studies. The panelists will present their views of the discussions which have been held and of plans for the future. The meeting is open to all interested visitors as well as to CEA members.

6:30 p.m. Riggs Restaurant, 45 West 33rd Street (one block west of Hotel Statler),

social hour, dinner, and Annual Meeting.

Monday, 29 December

7:30 a.m. Riggs Restaurant, Breakfast program for Regional CEA Leaders. Patrick G. Hogan, chairman; Donald G. Sears, secretary. Subject: "The Nature and Function of CEA and its Regionals"; "The Role of National CEA," Henry W. Sams, University of Chicago; "The Role of CEA Regionals," Patrick G. Hogan, Mississippi State College.

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CEA headquarters will be maintained, December 27-29, in the Hotel Statler. Members and friends are cordially invited to drop in. The Services of the CEA Bureau of Appointments, which functions on a twelve-month basis under the direction of Albert P. Madeira, will be available at the Hotel Statler. The only charge for Bureau registrants, who should be CEA members, is \$5.00 for a twelve-month period. The services are free to prospective employers. To ensure close co-operation between the MLA and the CEA, the CEA Bureau of Appointments will staff a desk in the interview room of the MLA Faculty Exchange in the Hotel Statler.

### REPORT OF CEA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

For President: John Ciardi, poetry editor, *The Saturday Review*; professor of English, Rutgers University; translator of Dante; Author of several volumes of poetry; former CEA national director; keynote speaker at 1956 Humanities Center Seminar; former faculty member, Harvard University Department of English; winner of many awards and honors.

For First Vice-President: Donald J. Lloyd, Wayne State University; co-author with Harry R. Warfel of *American English in Its Cultural Setting*; University Scholar at Yale, Yale Ph.D. in 1943; teaching positions at Oberlin and Indiana University; assistant editor, *Webster's New World Dictionary*; author of many articles.

For Second Vice-President: Harry T. Moore, Southern Illinois University; author of *The Intelligent Heart*, *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence*, *The Novels of John Steinbeck*; Fellow, the Royal Society of Literature; 1958 Guggenheim Fellow; contributor to *New York Times Book Review*, *Encounter*, *New Republic*, *Spectator*, *Saturday Review*, *Kenyon Review*; Boston University Ph.D. 1951.

For Directors: Charles M. Clark, The American University; Cornell Ph. D. 1942; teaching positions at Cornell and American University; active in Middle Atlantic CEA and on national CEA committees.

John Hicks, Stetson University; Iowa State Ph.D. 1939; author with C. R. Thompson of *Thought and Experience in Prose*; author of several textbooks and of *The Stoicism of Matthew Arnold* (1941); teaching positions at University of Louisville, Mississippi State College, Purdue, Miami University, Lawrence College, and Stetson University; regional director, CEA, 1955-56.

Thomas Marshall, Kent State University; University of Pennsylvania Ph.D., 1941; Fulbright Professor at University of Athens, Greece, 1953-54; teaching positions at University of Pennsylvania, Western Maryland College, Duke University, and Kent State; author of *Literature and Society, 1950-55*, a *Selective Bibliography, A History of the Philadelphia Theater, 1778-1890*, *An Analytical Index to American Literature*, etc.; national director of CEA

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Marvin Perry, Washington and Lee University; Harvard Ph.D., 1950; teaching positions at University of Virginia and Washington and Lee; Co-editor of *Modern Minds, Nine Short Novels*, and author of numerous articles and reviews.

For Nominating Committee: Harry R. Warfel, (Chairman), University of Florida, CEA National President 1947; Lee E. Holt, American International College, Managing Editor, *The CEA Critic*; W. W. Watt, Lafayette College, past president of Eastern Pennsylvania CEA.

G. Bruce Dearing, Chairman  
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Ralph Miller

#### Michigan CEA

The Mich. CEA met on Nov. 8 at Michigan State Univ. During the morning concurrent sessions discussed "Linguistics in Freshman Composition" (R. J. Geist); "The Great-book Approach to Literature" (John Timmerman); and "Teaching Advanced Writing Courses" (Emilie A. Newcomb).



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#### A NEW TEACHING METHOD

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have to be temporarily banished, along with the poems of Burns and Blake; but the fifteen weeks of the term already seemed too short for adequate treatment of the five major figures.

The next question was one of theme. Should the course have a focus? I fumbled for a while with the notion of following certain specific threads of thought: varying concepts of nature, or of man's relationship with society, or of the struggle between intellect and emotion, etc., etc. All of these, however, seemed only ragged fragments of a larger image, some great animating idea. I determined then that I would try to lead my students, via the works of the chosen authors, to the shaping of some theory of the essences of Romanticism. I furthermore determined that they should arrive independently, so far as possible, at their own conclusions.

Three major difficulties lay in the path. The first was the students' lack of a framework in which to fashion this theory, for they were generally pretty ignorant about specific names, dates, literary principles, criticisms, poems, and other concrete information; they had all had the so-called sophomore "survey" course, to be sure, but most of them could only remember vaguely that Wordsworth had somehow made the natural supernatural, while Coleridge had done the reverse (or something like that—nobody was quite sure), and Byron had had many love affairs—and so on. The second difficulty was the need for some device or stratagem that would give the course the powerful, rapid start it needed to approach the fulfillment of my ambitious objectives in fifteen weeks. The third problem was my distaste for the customary colorless and mechanical fashion of treating authors in a period course of this type as though each lived in a hermetically sealed compartment to be explored in a rigidly prescribed number of class sessions, seldom to be re-examined and rarely to be seen, in Wordsworth's phrase, as "a man speaking to men."

The final question, then, the key question, was one of attack. How could the initial handicaps be overcome, to drive towards a formulation of theory drawn from comprehensive but vividly introduced material? The answer was to break up the order of material in the course into four sections, more or less as follows:

I (five weeks). One week apiece was de-

voted to an intensive study of each of the five authors. A good part of this study was biographical, for it appeared clear to me—here was the electrification I wanted for the fast start—that much of the nature of English Romanticism was to be found in those five lives, each almost fictional in its peaks of excitement (with the possible exception of Wordsworth, Annette Vallon notwithstanding), and each bearing in it the seeds destined to grow into the great works that characterize the period. Among those works at this time we examined closely a handful of minor poems and at least one major poem for each author.

This schedule, it may be seen, punctuated with a number of brief quizzes designed to hint at important ideas, served several purposes: it gave a wide biographical and historical survey of the era; it suggested a number of common Romantic themes, philosophical concepts, and artistic methods; and it began to provide concrete literary material for comparison and contrasts.

II (one week). This section was given over to class discussion, which, granted, was not very profound, but which began to cast a few feeble illuminations upon larger issues. It was important, I found, to make sure that the poems assigned in the first five weeks were proper companion pieces, with challenging points of similarity and difference, and then to keep suggesting the more perceptive understanding would begin to develop with wider and deeper

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reading.

III (eight weeks). With a foundation on which to build, and with a few early insights, the students returned to a study of the five authors—but with an enormous difference from their green and hesitant beginning. Now they were enlightened enough to see their deficiencies, yet confident in the recognition of an intelligible framework. Having a fresh memory of, say, "Tintern Abbey," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a canto of "Childe Harold," two of Keats's great odes, and "To a Sky-lark" and "Ode to the West Wind," along with minor pieces, and having some understanding of the poets themselves, the students could grasp and correlate "Intimations of Immortality," or "Christabel," or "Adonais," or whatever, with increased assurance and delight.

Indeed, these eight weeks were most stimulating, for they brought with them a reassuring flexibility and extensiveness of allusion to specific ideas and poems, not in a narrow area, but across some of the widest and highest points of the entire Romantic Period.

IV (one week). This final section was a return to discussion, attempting to formulate theories and to state a few general principles based on fairly comprehensive knowledge (within the temporal limitations of one term's work.) It was a time, I should add, invested with the excitements and satisfactions of hard independent thought.

This ultimate self-examination and self-expression proved the value of trying this new method of teaching a one-term course in English Romantic Literature. The experiment by no means gave completely satisfactory results—partly because of occasional unwise choice of assignments and partly because I failed to keep all discussions alive and moving—but I believe it proved worthy of being tried again.

Vincent C. De Baun  
Wells College

## PROBLEM IN ENGLISH ONE

(Continued from p. 1)

lish Grammar, R. C. Pooley discusses three points of view governing three approaches: the traditional, the historical, and the experimental. This seems to me to be a satisfactory division, and now that the various approaches have been described and are being tried in various places, I hope that English publications will be able to give us more information about practical applications. Information about practical applications is what is lacking in most of the material available at present—with the pos-

sible exception of applications to speech. Pooley's work is excellent but his chapter on "Grammar in College Composition" is very short. It does, however, provide information which will lead to a better understanding of three approaches.

Forgetting speaking, reading, and listening because of the shortness of this paper, let us consider writing. Writing will probably continue to be the hard core of the English I course in most colleges. What is the position of grammar, or anything else, in respect to writing? Traditional grammar has been criticized often as not providing adequate definitions—of such things as the sentence, parts of speech, etc.—and the criticism is made sometimes as though it made a difference. Actually, it does not make much difference.

Very few teachers of English are interested in definitions as such. They are interested in having grammar contribute to skill in composition. They realize, for example, that "a group of words containing a subject and predicate and containing a complete thought" is not an accurate definition of a sentence. But the concept, wrong as it may be, can be used with beginning writers who run sentences together or use dependent clauses as sentences. The question is—will any of the hundred or so substitute definitions which are hardly more satisfactory be of as much value with college students who have neither the time nor the inclination to spend several weeks going over the possible concepts of the sentence? Take, for example, the definition, "a sentence is an utterance which is not part of a larger construction," and ask if this would be of much use to the puzzled freshman who writes, "I was at the dance last night I was with my girl friend Mary." Will any definition help him? I do not know—I have little faith in definitions.

I have read many able arguments concerning the superiority of one approach or another, but I have read few descriptions of applications which are completely convincing. We need more reports and more study.

Let me submit a composite composition which will contain a number of errors all English teachers find somewhat common. Perhaps the mistakes do not come quite so closely together. I have exaggerated for effect. What is in each approach to composition which would help to solve the problem—in the given time and under the given conditions, which means in one or two semesters and with large classes of non-English majors?

### Composition

A baseball player is lucky if he can restrain from injuries. Pitchers learn dirty tricks like throwing at batters heads which they pull on their opponents. Sometimes players slide with spikes high which is meant to cut up the baseman. There was an incident when a batsman was killed by being beamed this was in the major leagues about 1920. It was an accident but it show

(Please turn to p. 6)



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how dangerous the game can be. Their being many injuries due to the roughness of baseball today. Even when the players wear protection helmets they still get hurt from some dirty tricks of the game itself. Although, of course, not all injuries are serious by any means. Baseball is a fine game and spectators sport but I still say that baseball is a dangerous game.

The most obvious answer to the problem is the easy one—the student should not be in college. It's an answer we can not give. We cannot be satisfied with the careless defense that anyway the reader can understand what has been said—and so there is communication. We demand literate communication. We all know how we should like to have the student write this composition. We can use perhaps twelve periods dealing with functional grammar, or something which will do the work better. What shall it be? Let's see the proof. Personally, I would use any or all means available, singly or in combination, if the job could be done. Grammar is a means. Linguistics is a means. Writing and speaking are the important things.

James Binney  
West Chester STC

### PROPOSAL FOR THE PH.D.

(Continued from p. 1)

polity. The amount and varieties of knowledge called for in teaching from a typical English 1A-1B textbook are staggering in scope. As I see it, there will be no relief; we are committed to teaching students how to express ideas, and we believe that these ideas should arise from as many areas of learning as may be worthwhile.

Therefore, there is but one road for the

instructor; that is to learn as much as he can about as many disciplines as he can so that he can bring more guidance to class discussions, thereby making them more fruitful and less vehicular for insignificant chatter.

It would appear, then, that specialization in English is unwarranted for the junior college instructor as well as, I believe, for those who primarily will teach freshman composition courses in universities. Graduate study above the Master's Degree for those instructors should be broad in range, especially in all areas of humanities. Universities should offer a second type of Ph.D. for those teachers who feel their careers will be on the junior college levels where there is no expectation of teaching upper division or graduate courses and where there is no emphasis on publishing scholarly articles.

To avoid the charge of being too general, I list what I consider the basic courses in this new program: Anthropology, Cinema History and Criticism, History of Economic Doctrines, Great Masters of Art, Great Masters in Music, Great Philosophers and Philosophical Ideas, Ethics, Logic, Public Opinion and Propaganda, General Psychology, and Comparative Religions. At least six hours in history and political science should be required, with one of the courses bearing a title such as Theories of Government.

Assuming that all of the above courses carried two semester hours credit (in some schools this credit load would be impossible without other departmental co-operation) the candidate for the Ph.D. would have taken 28 hours in disciplines other than in English.

Obviously, titles of these courses vary from school to school, and most candidates will already have taken some of the courses. Such candidates would then elect other courses within the same discipline.

Twenty-six semester hours in English above the Master of Arts degree should be adequate, but these hours should be taken in courses best suited for the type of teaching the junior college instructor will do. Using the University of Southern California graduate school catalog as a guide, I would list Theory and Practice of Modern Criticism, Development of Modern English, Grammar and Composition, Semantics, Theory and Practice of Rhetoric, Structure of Modern English, General Linguistics, and Seminars in the Novel, the Short Story, Prose, Poetry, Drama, and Literature in Relation to the History of Ideas. In the description of these seminars the terms "practice in criticism" and "analysis" are used. In addition, I would exalt Vocabulary Building to an upper division course and make it a requirement.

Thus, this Ph.D. would require 54 graduate or upper division hours beyond the Master's degree. I do not consider this number of hours unrealistic, and certainly there should be no danger of a "cinch" degree

resulting.

Two items remain for discussion—the language requirement and the dissertation.

As the proposed degree has nothing to do with projected research, besides the dissertation, I see no need for any language requirement. However, as the program also is based on a humanities foundation and inasmuch as any humanist today should know at least one foreign language, I would recommend that the candidate become thoroughly familiar with one foreign language and literature, that is, that he be able to speak and write the language, as well as read it. This recommendation is based solely on a personal conclusion that more teachers would take a more kindly attitude toward the language requirement if they felt they had to master one language, rather than read two languages amateurishly. I may be wrong, but I feel an instructor today has more need of language for a potential Fulbright grant than for reading untranslated articles.

As to the dissertation, I recommend two changes: 1. that emphasis be taken off original research and be transferred to theses of criticism and analysis; 2. that the writer be allowed to make his study in two or more disciplines.

I must anticipate a question. Why institute a new program—why not just let the teacher take courses in those areas where he feels a need? My answer is that many college instructors, particularly junior college instructors, want a Ph.D. but realize that specialization is of little value to their teaching problems. These instructors have no burning desire to become university professors for any one of several reasons. They appreciate the fact that junior college teaching serves a worthwhile purpose, yet in some junior colleges a Ph.D. is necessary

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to reach the highest salary classification. They are not much interested in turning out monographs and articles for learned journals. They make a certain salary on the junior college level and would have to take a sizable cut in pay to go to a university.

Finally, to defend against the charge of pleading a special cause for junior college instructors, I call attention to the report of "Doctoral Studies in English and Preparation for Teaching" in the "CEA Critic" of March, 1958. This report, prepared by thirteen college and university professors, emphasizes many of the same points I have made in this essay.

Here are some sample quotations: "The committee is almost unanimous, in fact, on the primary importance of the aesthetic-critical approach in the preparation of the college teacher. By this term we mean the attempt to appreciate and understand the literary work as a work of art and craft, as an object for aesthetic contemplation, and to evaluate it by relevant principles of literary criticism." (p. 7)

"We believe it is largely by making the critical approach as pervasive as possible that the development of more effective teachers will be most fully achieved." (p. 8)

Lastly: "... if we have doctoral programs which encourage 'the philosophical habit of mind,' which emphasize breadth of knowledge as well as concentration, interpretation and evaluation as well as research, and a more humane approach to language studies, we think talented individuals will be more likely to pursue graduate studies, and that the whole mode of their training will have a salutary effect upon their later work as teachers." (p. 11)

Joseph M. Collier  
El Camino College

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## WRITE ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The magazine indexes in the college library are almost lost from view beneath the crowd of agitated freshmen. There is a nervous jam in the card catalog room. A line of perplexed youths has formed at the desk of the reference room librarian. The rows of encyclopedias show fearful gaps. In short, it's term paper time for the beginners—a time of irritation and stress for the students and a time of agonizing revelation for the librarians who once again discover how amazingly little freshmen know about using a library.

Is there anything that can be done that will at once both ease the lot of the freshmen and reduce the wear and tear on librarians who are forced to spend so much of their time answering elementary questions?

A good deal of the trouble could probably be eliminated if the freshman had the advantage of fuller and more gradual instruction in library work in first semester English. As things generally happen now, the English teacher holds back the library instruction until the second semester and then tries to present the minimum essentials in a few hurried weeks before the dreaded term paper is due. If, on the other hand, some of the written work in first semester English concerned itself with library topics, then the student would already have a useful acquaintance with the library and would not experience panic when called upon to do the extended research necessary for his term paper.

First semester English frequently devotes some attention to the explanation of simple directions and processes. Instead of picking up the usual batch of themes on how to make fudge, how to open a tin can, and how to operate a glass washer, the teacher might ask the student to supply in his own words an explanation of how to locate and use the card catalog and how to locate and use a major magazine index. And for brief directions, let the student tell how to find the Oxford English Dictionary or Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms on the reference shelf.

If a unit on diction precedes the term paper, the teacher instead of relying on the meager resources of the textbook might acquaint the student with the American Thesaurus of Slang or set him to investigating the new words in "Words, New Words and Meanings" in the Britannica Book of the Year or to reporting on the column "Among the New Words" in the magazine *American Speech*.

In place of a generalized assignment in comparison and contrast, the teacher might ask the student to sink his teeth into something solid by having him write a comparison of two rival encyclopedias, say *Britannica* and *Americana*, on such matters as general plan, history, price, indication of authorship, use of illustration, ways of keeping up to date, clarity of explanation, and the like. Assignments calling for a compar-

ison of the automobile ads of twenty years ago with those of today or asking for a contrast between sex appeal in ads forty years ago with that employed in today's periodicals would acquaint the freshman with the library's bound magazine besides providing him with some information worth writing up.

Again if one's purpose is to acquaint the student with the wealth of current magazines to which the library subscribes and also to discuss some rhetorical principles, the teacher might have the student survey the kinds of titles employed in this month's magazine articles or the different methods by which the authors handle the tricky problem of beginning an essay. Or one might have the student acquaint himself with four or five national newspapers by requesting an analysis of their front pages on the same day to show how the face of the news can be varied by large headlines, small headlines, and inside page placement.

Dozens of similar assignments that at the same time will give the freshman an opportunity to express himself, a knowledge of the resources of the library, and a body of information can be invented by the first semester composition teacher. And while one is at it, why not a theme on library manners? Some library users evidently need a reminder that it is not considerate to do one's homework in front of the periodicals indexes, that it is impolite to block the card catalog by failing to withdraw trays that require prolonged study, and that it is rude to rest one's feet on the top of tables in the reading room.

Robert L. Coard  
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## Composition, Communication, and Science

(Paper read April 26, 1958, at Middle Atlantic CEA Meeting)

With such an extensive topic as Composition and Communication, and Scientific Education, it is necessary immediately to restrict ourselves to a more limited phase of this general subject. Thus, I will attempt to give you my views on the importance of and the need for written expression in the education of the scientist.

The scientist must know how to express himself clearly, precisely and concisely with the spoken word, but more important he must be able to do this with the written word. This need for clear, precise and concise writing is twofold: first for his own personal development and advancement, a purely selfish motive, if you will, and second for the common good, by his contribution in writing to the general advancement of science.

Let us consider this first point: The importance of the written word for the personal advancement of the individual scientist. Some years ago an article appeared in one of the industrial chemical journals under the heading "Why Chemists Get Fired." This article consisted of a number of brief statements by various technical directors in industry on the outstanding faults of technical men. Though they gave many and diverse shortcomings, they all agreed on one: namely, the lack of ability in technical men to express themselves either orally or in writing. I would like to quote a few of these statements.

According to one: "We find a great fault in our present technical men in that they lack the power of self-expression either oral or written. Simple sentence construction seems difficult. . . . Compound sentence structure becomes just a jargon of conflicting tenses; singulars are used for plurals; pronouns are massacred."

And another one writes: "In my experience the greatest weakness of the average chemical engineer is his lack of ability to assemble a good report which is at once well organized, clear and persuasive."

And finally: "One of the most outstanding faults of technical men is their inability to use ably the English language. The writing of simple reports and the expressing of themselves verbally seem to be two things in which they are notably deficient." And so on, but I think this is enough to make the point clear that technical men need to know how to speak and write better.

Due to the great demand for scientists today, perhaps not too many of them get fired, but certainly their development and growth within a company, even from a monetary point of view, depends to a large extent on their monthly progress reports and therefore on their ability to write effectively. This is partially due to the fact that very often there is little direct contact

between the individual research worker and the director of research. Consequently the director of research must obtain most of his information and impressions about the ability of the various workers under him from the written reports submitted to him.

Thus it sometimes happens that real ability of a technical man goes unnoticed because of his inability to write clearly and precisely. For this reason his good work is poorly presented. This is especially true in the larger corporations and when we consider the present rate at which companies are merging one wonders if there will be any small companies in the future.

Nor do scientists in academic institutions escape the importance of effective self expression. Obviously their personal progress depends on their ability to speak effectively. It also depends to a large extent on their ability to write effectively, for today in practically all large universities and in many smaller colleges, a scientist must perform and publish his scientific research, if he is eventually to be promoted through the various academic grades from instructor to full professor. There are also scientific textbooks to be written. These are usually done by university professors and in this endeavor they must above all be clear and precise.

From all of this we see that regardless of whether the scientist is in an academic institution, in a government laboratory, or in industry, his advancement will be based to a very large extent on his writings: whether they be textbooks, scientific research publications, or monthly progress reports.

As to my second point: The need for clear, concise writing for the common good and the general advancement of science. Science progresses by research, but this research if it is to help science advance must be promulgated—it must be published so that the results of the various investigations become known and can be utilized. In the early days of science when most of the research was done by men who regarded their scientific interest more as a hobby than a vocation and who financed their own research, perhaps there was some excuse for not publishing the results of their work; but at the present time, when large amounts of money are supplied by others, both from public and private funds, it is imperative that the scientist know how to express himself in writing so that his results will not go unnoticed and unused. It is therefore his duty to publish these results within a reasonable time, so that they may contribute immediately to the common good and for the general advancement of science.

There does not seem to be a place any longer for the scientist who cannot speak and write effectively. Thus our picture of the scientist himself is gradually changing. At one time he was considered a very



isolated individual who needed only the ability to perform scientific research. Today he is no longer isolated and his life has become very complex with the need for many and various abilities—not least of which is the need for effective writing.

We may now ask ourselves: Is there a special need for clarity, for precision, and for conciseness in scientific writing? Certainly there is. The need for clarity is obvious. The most profound research or discovery may go unnoticed if the scientist can not report it to others in a clear manner so as to be understood.

The need for precision is greater in scientific writing than in literary prose. It is possible for literary writing to be effective, without in the strict sense being precise. After all, a literary author is an artist and as an artist he is interested in presenting an object in such a way that one can obtain a very clear idea of it. He paints, as it were, a verbal picture. If he can do this he is certainly being very effective. However, a technical writer must present this same object in such a precise manner that another research worker in some other part of the world can duplicate it in all its essential details. We certainly do not expect this from the literary writer, and in fact if he gave us such a detailed picture, we would find it very boring.

There is one last requirements of effective writing that applies very appropriately to scientific papers today. This is conciseness. This need for conciseness is over and above the fact that a concise statement is in general more clear and precise than a verbose one. When we consider the tremendous amount of research work being performed and published and with this the very great advances being made by scientists in all the various disciplines, we can at least begin to see the need for conciseness. There is neither space to print nor time to read superfluous words. At the present rate of advancement of science, it is a difficult thing just to be able to keep abreast of one's own particular field, without having to waste time with unnecessary words.

I do not intend to indicate with these brief remarks that science has any monopoly on clear, precise and concise writing or that conciseness is more important for science than for other fields of endeavor. I am just trying to point out its importance as far as the scientist is concerned.

In conclusion, I wish to say that clear, precise written expression must play a very important role in the education of scientists both for their own personal good and for the general good for the advancement of science. This is something which the scientist never doubts, but something that the would-be scientist may tend to ignore.

Richard E. Rebbert  
Georgetown University

## Latin: Unpopular, Deserted, Necessary

I have been teaching French, Spanish, and German for many years, and have ended the experience with a considerable sense of futility.

If I had based my efforts mainly on mimicry principles, and had not inquired anxiously into the English-language state of my foreign-language charges, I might have glowed a little more along the way; but that would in no degree mitigate the present general feeling of uselessness of which I speak. My only professional consolation is that I helped a few, a very few namely, those who already possessed a serious equipment in the structure and vocabulary of their own native tongue.

Most students come to college a half to three-quarters or more illiterate in their own English. The man on the street, the professional "educators," and the average college and university professors outside of English, and often even inside that department, point to the dictionary, and to courses in composition and speech, and say there is the college answer to language ills. They confidently think that language learning is in no way different in kind from that relating to business or sociological courses or science fields.

They may be right if their own average attainments in language (their own, for they did not get very far in any other) are to be taken as a high norm of useful accomplishment. But Heaven forbid a consummation of that sort!

It should finally be known in the United States (as has always been known in educationally wise old Europe) that many forms of discipline are required to produce a sound and healthy state of the native language in a person or in a country. It must be made the hard center of the curriculum from the earliest student days. Directions and indirections must conspire early and late to make one's language an integral, automatically operative, part of him. Late and hurriedly applied veneers implicit in the dictionary on the shelf and vocabulary-building courses in college are last resorts, better than nothing perhaps, but applied in the later, busier years, forlorn as ultimate expedients.

It is as gratuitous to doubt the foundation nature of Latin for English as it is to reject the indispensability of mathematics for the operations and development of science and the reasoning faculties. Proof could be spun out to an almost endless degree for both these propositions, but why waste time and energy doing so when the general world of thinkers has established them as axiomatic? Some, with personal interest in a modern foreign language, jealously assert that this can be a disciplinary linguistic substitute for Latin. But obviously the conditions and objectives of the study of these are quite different. Besides, if we are thinking of the lower schools, which of several equally important modern

languages shall be selected, for there is no space or time for them all?

The better thing to do in America, at least for the present, and until we can finally work up again a thoroughly healthy language tradition, is to require Latin alone in the lower schools. Then the freshman college student, equipped linguistically to begin a modern foreign Language with some hope of success, can proceed in the latter with the speed and intelligence required, and a consequent feeling for it that has a really durable basis preventing the subject from slipping altogether out of his interests and his grasp.

If, in this country, we attempt to "throw" modern foreign languages at children (supposing wildly that enough competent teachers could be found for that martyr's task—for with any sort of lapse the labor is lost) to the exclusion of Latin we are not going to assure any thorough knowledge of any language, our own included, as an ultimate asset, though we may indeed turn out a certain number of interesting child-parrots.

My principal quarrel in this Latin matter is not with those who are ignorant of the essentials of the health of language, but

(Please turn to p. 10)

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## LATIN: UNPOPULAR, DESERTED (Continued from p. 9)

with the connoisseurs and experts who have succumbed, under the general inertia of entertainment-loving students and contemporary educational trends away from language tradition, to a very throughgoing case of defeatism.

A recent letter from a prominent thinker and writer on educational affairs puts the matter thus; "It certainly would be far better for the teaching of English if we should require our students to study Latin; but I think it entirely out of the realm of practical politics to advocate such a thing. There is not the ghost of a chance of a revival of Latin in the public schools in this our day. It is too bad, but facts are facts. Neither the educators nor the public believe that such study is of any use. You and I know better." (This was written, be it noted, before the Sputnik era).

I shall not use space to list further remarks along this line, though I can find many such in my correspondence with persons highly respected in the conservative educational sphere, including especially some foreign-born university professors among us, who would not tolerate the absence of Latin in the foundational systems in their own lands, but who think they must bow their heads to majority opinion and pervasive trends in their adopted country. They pine for securer anchoring of the system into whose toils they are thrown, but reason apparently that specific urging from foreigners will not be kindly taken.

They are far more timorous in this case, I feel, than American character or the situation warrants, for they are recognized as men and women irreplaceable in our councils of higher education, and their collective opinions, uttered without fear of consequences, would carry weight and power. We need their assistance all the more since we cannot here in America depend for public intellectual backing, in the matter of Latin's claims, upon our own professors of English and modern foreign languages.

It may be that those in the various associations of teachers of English who have given thought to the subject (and I suspect that their number is not large) believe that, although a favoring attitude on the part of English toward Latin has always been implicit in the very nature of things, there are other causes for Latin's decline, unconnected with English silence, that are in themselves compelling, and not to be altered by English attempts at intervention on Latin's behalf.

But even if this were so, the fact would not excuse English for not admitting its plain duty in the case of its own self-defense, and for not acting forcefully. I think I use the last word advisedly, because it seems plain to me that English, in its highly protected, even pampered state, could secure from educational officialdom practically anything it set its heart upon.

In America we try fruitlessly to preach

elementary human manners into adult drivers of automobiles. We similarly endeavor to elevate the sentiments and practices of full-grown and so-called good citizens who start forest fires and litter up the landscape. And just as absurdly we try to put on the trappings of good English, after the plastic years have gone by, by a clumsy fumbling with the dictionary, and a reluctantly undertaken course or two in writing "themes" and "building" in three months insignificant, foundationless vocabularies.

If we are to have automobile drivers with manners and consciences and otherwise good citizens of the country, we must assure the essential mental controls and leanings by the age of fifteen at the latest; and by the same token, if we aspire to national competence in language, we cannot afford in high school days to disregard and neglect the discipline of Latin.

A. M. Withers  
Va. Polytechnic Institute

## TEACHING LARGER CLASSES

Summary of talk given at the Spring 1958 meeting of The Michigan CEA, April 19, 1958

Those who face the problem of teaching larger classes often ask: How can we teach our course by closed-circuit television or tape recordings? I believe this is a bad first question. A better one would be: Under what conditions did we ourselves learn best when we were in college? This question opens up another avenue of approach. For example, if we are sure that the seminar method of teaching writing is a greatly effective one, we should determine whether there are elements in it which can be applied in a classroom of 60 to 200 students. I believe this to be a fruitful line of inquiry.

Closed-circuit television experiments all over the country report that student learn-

ing is generally as good from TV screen as from the instructor in the traditional classroom. On such evidence, the English teacher is obliged to experiment with TV, remembering that it is no magic instrument, but rather one appropriate for some kinds of courses and inappropriate for others. For example, literature courses seem to make more sense on TV than writing courses.

Those who experiment with methods of teaching larger classes should keep two points in mind while they are tripping over wires and blowing out fuses. The first is that the administrator who asks them to teach double the usual number of students with half the number of instructors without lowering the quality of the learning experience is being dangerously utopian. The second is that the fact that the TV course teaches as much as the non-TV course may prove only that neither is teaching enough to be really significant in the life of the student.

If huge enrollments materialize, we face a stupendous assignment. If we turn over our responsibilities as teachers to those who are trained only to operate machines, we will fail. If we induce the most intelligent and committed teachers to take on this assignment, we have a fair chance of giving our students an education.

Ken Macrorie  
Michigan State Univ.

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